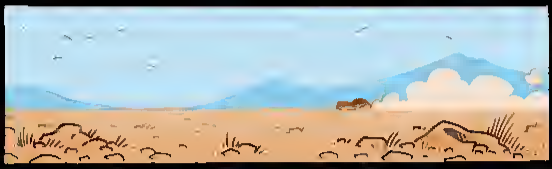
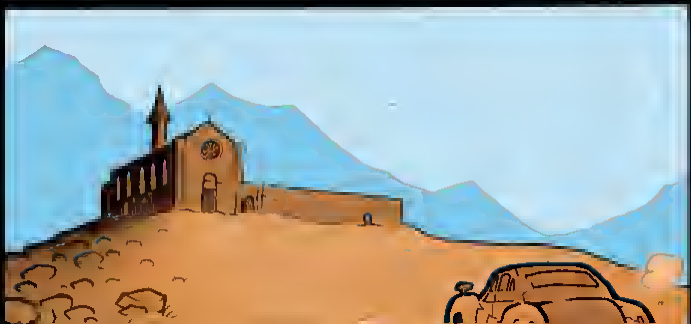
APOCALYPTIC
HORSEPLAY
BY BORGDMAN

CHAPTER III: HELLSPAWN





ORFANATO DE SAN JUAN
ZARAGOZA, SPAIN

BIENVENIDOS A NUESTRO ORFANATO, CABALLEROS.
GRACIAS HERMANA.
ESPERO QUE HAYAN TENIDO UN BUEN VIAJE.
POR DESGRACIA, LAS CARRETERAS SE PARECEN MUCHO EN ESTA REGION.*

*: "I HOPE YOU HAD A NICE TRAVEL. UNFORTUNATELY THE ROADS VERY MUCH LOOK ALIKE IN THESE PARTS."

*: YES. THE OLD WOMAN WAS VERY... GOOD.

MY APOLOGIES, SISTER. I REALLY DON'T KNOW ANY MORE SPANISH.
DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH OR ITALIAN BY ANY CHANCE ?
AH YES.
ENGLISH IS FINE.

WE ACTUALLY DIDN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND THE FIRST MESSAGE YOU SENT US.
IT SAID YOU WERE LOOKING TO ADOPT AN ORPHAN?
NOT EXACTLY. WE ARE LOOKING FOR AN ORPHAN.
A SPECIFIC ONE.

WE DON'T KNOW HIS NAME, ONLY THAT HE WAS BORN IN BEIJING AND BROUGHT INTO YOUR CARE SOMETIME IN THE LAST TEN YEARS.
OH. I SEE. IS ONE OF YOU THE FATHER?
NO, AND THAT IS VERY MUCH THE POINT.
THIS CHILD HAS NO FATHER.

ORPHANS RARELY DO.
THIS IS NO ORDINARY ORPHAN, SISTER.
THE MOTHER HERSELF WAS AN INFANT WHO DID NOT SURVIVE HIS BIRTH.
OUR ORDER AND MANY OTHERS HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR HER PROGENY EVER SINCE...
...BUT IT APPEARS SOMEONE HAS GONE TO GREAT LENGTHS TO KEEP HIS IDENTITY AND WHEREABOUTS A SECRET.
A SECRET?
WHY ON EARTH WOULD THIS ORPHAN BE OF INTEREST TO YOU?

IS HE HERE THEN?
CAN YOU TAKE US TO HIM?
I'M SORRY, GENTLEMEN. BUT I WILL DO NO SUCH THING UNLESS YOU ASSURE ME YOU HAVE NO INTENTION OF HARMING THIS CHILD!
SISTER YOU MUST UNDERSTAND ...
WE HAVE REASONS TO BELIEVE THIS CHILD WAS SPAWNED BY THE ADVERSARY.

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY SIGNS SINCE HIS ARRIVAL? ANY STRANGE PHENOMENA?
IF HE IS WHO WE THINK HE IS, HIS ABILITIES SHOULD HAVE MANIFESTED THEMSELVES BY NOW.
I... NO, I DON'T BELIEVE ...
PLEASE TAKE US TO HIM
WE ONLY WISH TO ASSESS THE BOY'S NATURE, AND IF HE REALLY IS HUMAN, NO HARM WILL COME TO HIM. YOU HAVE MY WORD.
...VERY WELL.
?

EXCUSE ME, BUT... WHERE ARE ALL THE CHILDREN?
SHOULDN'T WE HAVE SEEN SOME BY NOW?
NOT AT THIS HOUR. THEY'RE ALL GATHERED FOR SUPPER IN THE COMEDOR.
THE DINING ROOM.
IS THAT WHERE WE'RE GOING?
HEAVENS NO, I DON'T WISH TO MAKE A SCENE.
I'M TAKING YOU STRAIGHT TO THE CHILD'S ROOM: YOU WILL WAIT FOR ME THERE.

DO ALL YOUR ORPHANS GET THEIR OWN ROOM?
WELL, NO. MOST OF THEM SLEEP TOGETHER IN THE DORMITORIES.
MOST OF THEM ?
... ALL OF THEM.
ALL BUT ONE.

LISTEN. I HAVE ONE LAST FAVOR TO ASK.
WHATEVER HAPPENS HERE YOU CANNOT TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT.
THE DETAILS OF OUR INVESTIGATION MUSTN'T LEAVE THESE WALLS.
?
I ASSURE YOU, THEY WILL NOT.

AND IN FACT, NEITHER WILL YOU.
?
?!

W... WHAT IS THIS?
DEAR LORD. THEY'VE ALL BEEN POSSESSED!

CHILDREN! SISTER. PLEASE. YOU MUST RESIST HIM!
WHICHEVER ONE IT IS, YOU CANNOT ALLOW THIS BOY TO TAKE OVER YOUR SOULS!
YOU ARE MISTAKEN, EXORCIST.
THE CHILD IS ALREADY LONG GONE.

AND I NEVER SAID IT WAS A BOY.